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ABSTRACT

Eight classes (140 students) in 10th- and 11th-grade were taught English composition using either an "errorless" or a "dialectical" method, each involving a model paragraph. The progress of the students was examined using the STEP and Composition Rating Scales before and after the instruction. Significant changes in the students' scores occurred for both experimental methods over a period of a year. No differences were obtained between the students following the errorless and dialectical methods. During their 12th-grade, the students wrote another essay, and the results indicated that the changes noted during the original instruction persisted into the fourth year of high school for those who had been instructed while in the 11th-grade, but not for those who had been instructed a year and a half earlier. Conclusions indicated that the importance of thoughtful imitation, a crucial step in learning the most sophisticated kinds of behavior, has often been underestimated in teaching. (Appendices provide a sample model paragraph, parts of an errorless and a dialectical lesson, an analysis of the model paragraph and practical exercises, and the composition rating scales. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (Author/LH)

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AN EXPERIMENT IN THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH COMPOSITION

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Students in second and third year of high school were taught English composition using either an 'errorless' or a 'dialectical' method. The progress of the students was examined using the STEP and Composition Rating Scales. Significant changes in the students' scores occurred for both experimental methods over the period of a year. No differences were obtained between the students following the errorless and dialectical methods. The changes that occurred persisted into the fourth year of high school for those who had been instructed by the experimental methods within six months of the final testing, but not for those who had been instructed a year and a half earlier.

Students in the United States have difficulty in learning to write well: at least one would be led to believe this if one read the *Saturday Review*, *The English Teacher* or the essays of students themselves. It is a common viewpoint, often expressed by teachers of English, that it is difficult to teach someone how to write and that many years of patient nurture go into the production of a writer. But what, besides time, is required? How precisely, do good and bad writers differ? It is difficult to come to answers to such questions in the literature, and indeed most teachers are hard-pressed for an answer when asked by students, 'What can I do to improve my writing?' Perhaps most students never ask and if they do, they may well be told to 'make a greater effort' or 'your style needs improving.'

Over thirty years ago, Ralph Tyler suggested that

> Each objective must be defined in terms which clarify the kind of behaviour which the course should help develop among the students; that is to say, a statement is needed which explains the meaning of the objective by describing the reactions we can expect of persons who have reached the objective (2, p. 18).

Bloom, Cronbach, Mager and others give high priority to the clarification of goals of instruction. Such too is the primary focus of this paper. When we began work in 1964, seven high-school English teachers and myself wondered if we could clearly define the steps which a person must take when writing in order to ensure that the product will be satisfactory. The present paper is a description of our efforts and of an experiment in which we attempted to teach writing.

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METHOD

The teachers involved in the experiment outlined their own strategies of writing. These strategies were gathered together and arranged in what we called maps, which are basically listings of the things one does when one writes. Next, a map or strategy was taught to high school students in one of two ways, 'errorless' or 'dialectical,' following the Ginther model of instruction (1). The errorless method was highly structured and forestalled all but a trivial number of errors (cf. Appendix 1:2), while the dialectical method relied on the students' ability to recognize or discover important characteristics embedded in sample model paragraphs (cf. Appendix 1:3).

The total sequence from the introduction of the model paragraph to be studied to the students' application of the principles he had learned in his own writing was called a 'unit of instruction.' Each unit was built around a model paragraph of the type illustrated in Appendix 1:1. It began with the presentation of the model paragraph followed by a lesson, conducted according to the errorless method for some classes and the dialectical method for other classes. This was followed by the presentation of the map and, finally, supervised writing, in which students were asked to follow the map closely at first and then to modify the map as they became more skilful. The main function of the maps was to involve pupil and teacher alike in the business of writing. From the student's point of view they did this by providing him with detailed instructions on how to apply the structure of a model paragraph to any topic. Each unit of instruction lasted approximately a week. An average of six units were taught each year in the experimental classes.

In general, the errorless lessons were written, tested and revised using students who did not participate in the experiment. The procedure used in their development was as follows:

1. We attempted to define the behaviour we were trying to develop as clearly as possible. For example, one unit was devoted to writing a paragraph which used both positive and negative examples in a planned sequence.

2. We constructed maps which represented what we did when we wrote. A typical map might involve describing the choice of an initial quotation, the choice of a topic sentence, subordinate ideas, positive and negative examples and a conclusion. Appendix 1.4 contains portions of a map dealing with the selection of examples and their arrangement (cf. Practices 2 and 3); in this appendix, the teacher incorporates his map into an

analysis of a paragraph. In preparing programmes for errorless classes, we tried not to include trivial questions, or ask questions which did not lead to our goal; also we tried not to make our questions so long or complicated that the student who knew the answer would not be able to figure out what was being asked.

3. We taught the lessons, recorded errors and revised faulty frames before presenting the lessons to the experimental group.

Dialectical lessons were then based on the errorless lessons. This transition was made by using the stimulus paragraphs, but eliminating the expository portion of the instruction. Questions were the main vehicle of instruction used by the teacher. Correct responses were praised and written on the blackboard. Teachers said 'No' or 'That's not right' when students volunteered incorrect answers.

Students (n:140) of above average ability in their second (sophomore) and third (junior) years in senior high school were randomly assigned to classes. The students were fifteen to sixteen years of age. Four classes were taught map units using the errorless method and four using the dialectical method. Some were instructed according to the maps only in their second year of high school (59 students), some only in their third year (27 students) and some in both their second and third years (54 students).

At the beginning and end of each year's work, students were given the Sequential Tests of Educational Progress (STEP) (Writing), Level 2, and they were required to write an essay. STEP is a multiple-choice examination; students are presented with written paragraphs which contain errors and are asked to select a correction from a number of alternatives. The test covers a wide range of topics relevant to writing: vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and style. Students also wrote fifty-minute essays on two standard topics. (One topic was: Why read? Students were asked to present arguments that would convince their friends that reading was, or was not, important.)

The students essays were scored using Composition Rating Scales (Appendix 2). Raters received two days training in the use of the scale; during this time, certain rules for clarifying scoring procedures were worked out. In the experiment, each student's paper was rated independently by two raters; correlations between ratings by pairs of judges ranged between .64 and .81.

The experiment had formally concluded for all students by the time they had completed their third year in high school. However, at the end of the first semester of their fourth (senior) year, all students wrote two

one-hour essays in class as part of their final examinations. Each essay was graded by five senior teachers on the basis of each teacher's global impression of the essay. These teachers had not been involved in the experiment and did not know which of the students had taken part. The grades obtained by students at this stage were studied in relation to the way they had been taught during the experimental period.

RESULTS

No significant differences in writing ability as measured by STEP and the Composition Rating Scales were found between classes taught by the errorless and classes taught by the dialectical method at either the second or third year level. Though there was an occasional significant difference on one or two scales, a significant multivariate F was never obtained and scales that showed significant differences one year did not show them the next. Significant differences were noted between scores gained at the beginning and end of each year on STEP and on five of the Composition Rating Scales. This was true for both second and third year students. Although this analysis showed that writing was improving, the improvement could not at this stage be attributed to the use of the maps, since no control classes were used.

In 1967, the students who were then in their fourth year in high school could be divided into four categories: (a) students who had not been instructed by means of writing maps (control group); (b) students who had been instructed according to the maps in their second (sophomore) year, approximately a year and a half earlier; (c) students who had been taught according to the maps in their third (junior) year, a half year delay being involved here; and (d) students who had studied the maps in both their second and third years.

The grades obtained by students in each of these four categories in an essay-writing examination at the end of the first semester of their fourth (senior) year are set out in Table 1. This table shows that relatively few students in the most recently taught groups and relatively few who were in the programme for two years had obtained grades in the two low categories, D and F. Students who had studied units involving maps six months prior to testing did better than those who had not. A delay of a year and a half, it would seem, was too long an interval over which to maintain gains. Thus, the kinds of writing skills involved seem to require sustained encouragement.

Ranks of from 1 to 4 were assigned to the four treatment groups described above and ranks of from 1 to 5 were allotted to grades F to A

TABLE 1

SENIORS' SCORES ON MID-TERM ESSAY EXAMINATIONS FOR COLLEGE PREPARATORY CLASSES, 1967

(N=390 Essays)

	Essays by seniors not in classes using the maps		Essays by seniors with map instruction in 1964-65 (Sophomore Year) only		Essays by seniors with map instruction in 1965-66 (Junior Year) only		Essays by seniors with map instruction for two years (1964-1966)	
Grades	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
A	9	8	10	8	8	15	14	13
B	36	31	24	27	17	31	41	37
C	36	31	54	42	26	48	37	34
D	27	24	27	21	3	6	13	12
F	3	3	3	2	0	0	2	2
Essay not turned in	4	3	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total number of essays turned in	111		118		54		107	

obtained in the fourth-year examination. The Spearman rank-order correlation coefficient between grade and hypothesized strength of treatment was then computed. The coefficient was found to be .156, which for 390 cases is significant beyond the .005 level.

In addition to examining the two essays written by students for their examination, teachers in the fourth year classes were asked to comment in general on student writing. They were asked 'Have you noticed any differences in the writing of your students this year as compared with previous years? If so, what are they?' All teachers reported that they felt that the seniors in classes that included those taught according to maps wrote better than the seniors in the classes of the previous year. Specific improvements in the following skills were mentioned: the use of topic sentences and transitional words, punctuation using the colon and semi-colon, greater variety in sentences, awareness of structure and the use of better over-all organization. These skills (with the exception of skill in using punctuation*) were all covered in the lessons.

Finally, when the students who were taught errorless units by the author of the units were compared with students taught by other teachers, the latter did significantly better. It would thus be difficult to claim that the greater knowledge or enthusiasm of the author of the materials was a significant factor in producing the superior performance of the experimental groups.

CONCLUSION

The significant changes in writing skills achieved by students in this study suggest the possibility of improving writing ability by means of thoughtful intervention. Our type of intervention employed considerable imitation of models. The importance of imitation, a crucial step in learning the most sophisticated kinds of behaviour, has often been underestimated in teaching. This may be because learning by imitation is often thought appropriate only to the attainment of trivial goals. However, this study seems to show that when applied to difficult learning tasks, imitation may be not only appropriate but essential.

*Although punctuation was not presented as a unit in itself a number of the units included model paragraphs with sophisticated punctuation. The colon and semi-colon were specifically included in the units, as well as quotation marks. Students were reported to have used semi-colons extensively and correctly in their regular writing.

APPENDIX 1

This appendix written by one of the experimental teachers, Robert Thurston from Leyden Township High School contains a model paragraph followed by a small section of a lesson taught in each of the two experimental styles—errorless and dialectical. Finally, an analysis of the model paragraph with directions for student writing is included.

1.1. MODEL PARAGRAPH

[1]The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. [2]He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. [3]He has a fine Geneva watch, but he fails of the skill to tell the hour by the sun. [4]A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. [5]The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. [6]His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increased the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity entrenched in establishments and forms, some vigour of wild virtue. [7]For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom where is the Christian?

(From 'Self reliance' by Ralph Waldo Emerson.)

1.2. PORTION OF ERRORLESS LESSON
(supporting statements with examples)

A. *Choose examples carefully (positive and negative)*
B. *Arrange examples in an effective order (simple and familiar to complex and unfamiliar)*

CUE: Read the paragraph. While reading, number the sentences. You should have seven sentences if you numbered correctly.
CUE: Emerson believes that while man has improved his material surroundings, he has lost a part of his self-reliance. He believes that man NO LONGER RELIES ON HIMSELF; HE RELIES ON HIS INVENTIONS.*
QUESTION: ——, does Emerson believe man relies on his inventions or himself?
ANSWER: INVENTIONS.
CUE: Yes, Emerson's idea in the paragraph is to explain how man depends more on material gain than on himself in the 19th century. After reading the paragraph and numbering your sentences 1-7, you will notice that Emerson gives many EXAMPLES to explain his belief. These EXAMPLES support his general statement by making his meaning MORE CLEAR.
QUESTION: ——, what does Emerson use to support his general statement?
ANSWER: | EXAMPLES (or) CLEAR EXAMPLES. † |
CUE: Very good.

*Capitalized sentences are written on the blackboard.
†Boxed answers should be written on the blackboard or an overhead projector to keep main ideas in front of the student.

QUESTION: ——, what do these examples do for Emerson's general statement?
ANSWER: MAKE IT MORE CLEAR.
CUE: Quite right. We can use examples to SUPPORT or EXPLAIN a general statement and make it MORE CLEAR to the reader. For example, if you make the general statement that one teacher's class is more interesting than another's you could support your belief and make it more clear by giving examples—that the teacher prepares carefully, uses humour with the students, presents material in an interesting way. These examples CLARIFY the general statement by making CLEAR to the reader what the writer means by the statement.

QUESTION: ——, what can a writer use to clarify a general statement or belief?
ANSWER: EXAMPLES.
CUE: Very good.

QUESTION: ——, what do examples do for general statements or beliefs?
ANSWER: CLARIFY THEM (or) MAKE THEM MORE CLEAR (or) SUPPORT THEM.
CUE: That's right. A scientific article will use SPECIFIC examples or scientific research; a sports article will use SPECIFIC examples of all-time batting averages; an advertizing display will use SPECIFIC examples of the ways in which the product is superior to others.

QUESTIONS: ——, what kind of meaning do examples give to general statements?
ANSWER: SPECIFIC MEANING.
CUE: Fine. Frequently a writer has an abstract or hard to define statement to clarify and EXAMPLES can help define or clarify. Emerson's statement might be hard to understand because many people only think of man's material gain as having POSITIVE values. Certainly they seldom think of the NEGATIVE values unless they are pointed out to them. So Emerson has a two-fold job: EMPHASIZE the NEGATIVE aspect of the material gain and insure that the NEGATIVE EXAMPLES he uses are familiar to the reader. The writer who wants to be UNDERSTOOD will use EXAMPLES that refer to objects, happenings, or other ideas the reader is FAMILIAR with. FAMILIAR EXAMPLES not only SUPPORT general statements but also help CLARIFY them.

QUESTION: ——, besides being specific, what is another characteristic of examples that support or clarify general statements?
ANSWER: | HE READER'S EXPERIENCE. |
CUE: That's right. Notice Emerson's first examples in sentence one.
QUESTION: ——, what does Emerson say the 19th century civilized man has built?
ANSWER: A FINE COACH.
CUE: Right!

QUESTION: ——, what does Emerson say the 19th century man has lost because he has invented a fine coach?
ANSWER: THE USE OF HIS FEET.
CUE: Yes! Coach and feet were familiar to the 19th century reader just as today everyone is familiar with the automobile and, of course, feet. These are FAMILIAR examples drawn from the reader's EXPERIENCE. If we think about the examples today, we could agree that many people get into their cars just to drive a short distance; we may agree with Emerson that man has lost the

use of his feet. Man relies too much on MECHANICAL power rather than his OWN power.

1.3. PORTION OF DIALECTICAL LESSON
(supporting statements with examples)

A. *Choose examples carefully* (*positive and negative*)
B. *Arrange examples in an effective order* (*simple and familiar to complex and unfamiliar*)

PURPOSE: The student is to discover inductively the rhetorical structure of a paragraph from Emerson's essay on 'Self-Reliance.' He is to discover that Emerson's rhetorical effectiveness is due to skilfully chosen and arranged examples. Once the student has discovered Emerson's rhetorical effectiveness, he will 'map' it and try to reproduce it using a topic of his own choice.
Step One: Statement of idea.
Write Emerson's main idea on the blackboard. 'Emerson believes that while man has improved his material surroundings, he has lost a part of his self-reliance.'

or

'Man relies on his inventions, not on himself—his independence in thus threatened.'
Step Two: Discovering that examples support and clarify general statements.
QUESTION: Some readers may not quite understand what Emerson means by this statement. How might he clarify it?
ANSWER: EXAMPLES.
QUESTION: What should examples do?
ANSWER: CLARIFY OR SUPPORT THE MAIN IDEA.
Step Three: Discovering content of Emerson's examples—the positive values of material surroundings or inventions.
QUESTION: Let's see if Emerson uses examples of material gain or invention which threaten man's self-reliance. Can anyone give an example of what Emerson considers a material gain?
ANSWER: (Keep asking the question until all of the gains are listed.) Coach—crutch — watch — almanac — notebook — libraries — insurance — machinery — philosophy.
Step Four: Discovering what Emerson believes to be the negative values of these gains—the loss of self-reliance.
QUESTION: What, according to Emerson, is the loss to man's self-reliance for good?

* * * *

Step Fifteen: Discovering again the familiar (minor) to unfamiliar (major) order of examples.
QUESTION: We said that 'coach,' 'feet,' 'muscle,' 'watch,' 'libraries,' etc., are familiar to the reader. What examples in sentence 6 are less familiar or more complex, perhaps less definable?

ANSWER: WIT, ENERGY, CHRISTIANITY, VIRTUE.
QUESTION: Again, how do the examples begin and end the paragraph, that is, what is the nature of the examples?
ANSWER: PARAGRAPH BEGINS WITH WAY MAN TRAVELS AND ENDS WITH WAY HE LIVES UP TO HIS PHILOSOPHY OR RELIGION.
Step Sixteen: Why order from familiar or minor to unfamiliar or major? Discovering how to woo the reader; get him to accept an idea.
QUESTION: Why order from simple (minor) to complex (major)?
ANSWER: INVOLVE THE READER: IF READER ACCEPTS MINOR POINTS HE SHOULD ACCEPT MAJOR ONES.
QUESTION: What is the final major (idea) point?
ANSWER: MAN DOESN'T PRACTISE HIS PHILOSOPHY OR RELIGION.
QUESTION: Why does Emerson state final point (idea) as a question?
ANSWER: HE WANTS READER TO THINK ABOUT IT: READER SUPPLIES OWN ANSWER.
Step Seventeen: Discovering end of map.
QUESTION: Let's review our discoveries which we have written on the board. Should we add any more?
ANSWER: ADD IDEA THAT PARAGRAPH ENDS WITH A QUESTION THAT TENDS TO ACT AS A SUMMARY: FORCES READER TO DRAW HIS CONCLUSIONS.
Step Eighteen: Student draws a map of the paragraph and will reproduce Emerson's structure using topic of own choice.
QUESTION: We now pose a problem. Suppose you are to write a paragraph in which you state that material advances in the 20th century have taken away man's self-reliance (for example, that television occupies leisure hours, but dulls our minds). If we follow the map of organization that we discovered in Emerson's paragraph, what steps would we take to reproduce Emerson's rhetorical structure?
ANSWER: STATE THE TOPIC; DECIDE ON THE AUDIENCE; SELECT EXAMPLES; ARRANGE EXAMPLES FROM FAMILIAR AND SIMPLE TO UNFAMILIAR AND COMPLEX.

1.4. AN ANALYSIS OF THE EMERSON PARAGRAPH AND PRACTICE EXERCISES

The purpose of the paragraph is to persuade the reader to accept the idea that as man improves his material environment, he loses part of his self-reliance. In support of this idea, the author utilizes comparison and contrast examples and arranges them in a simple to complex, familiar to unfamiliar order or progression.

The general structure of the paragraph is as follows:
SENTENCE 1: The first sentence is a simple and familiar example of a material gain and its effect on man's self-reliance. The sentence is not a topic sentence but acts as a 'stepping stone' to an understood topic sentence.
Elements: Man has built a mode of transportation (positive) but (contrasting conjunction) has lost the use of his feet for locomotion (negative). Emphasis is achieved for the loss of self-reliance by using the contrasting conjunction 'but' and by placing the negative aspect last.

SENTENCE 2: The second sentence is constructed in the same manner as sentence 1. The example is also familiar and simple and repeats example one. In place of coach is the word 'crutch'; in place of feet is the word 'muscle.' Coaches are crutches that weaken man's muscle in his feet.

SENTENCE 3: The third sentence is constructed in the same manner as the previous two. Here the idea is that man is drawing away from nature: he depends on a watch and not on the sun for telling time.

SENTENCE 4: The fourth sentence is constructed in the same manner as the previous three except that the contrasting conjunction is replaced by the transitional 'and so.' Again, the example is simple and familiar and repeats the idea of the third example as the second example repeats the idea of the first example.

SENTENCE 5: The fifth sentence contains three negative examples written as a series and relates to nature; the movements of the sun causing night and day (again a contrast) and summer and winter (again a contrast); and man's use of the calendar instead of his eyes to tell the seasons. Emerson omits the positive values of each example which (he hopes) the reader will think about himself. The negative aspects are mentioned for emphasis: man's loss of self-reliance. Notice also that the examples are getting more complex and more unfamiliar.

SENTENCE 6: The sixth sentence also contains only the negative aspects of man's material gain, and as with the previous three examples, are more complex and unfamiliar to the reader than the examples in the first four sentences. Here, 'wit,' 'virtue,' and 'philosophy' are offered as examples rather than such relatively simple objects to understand as 'coaches,' 'crutches,' and 'watches.' The examples are arranged in the same manner as in sentence 5.

SENTENCE 7: The seventh sentence contains the most complex and unfamiliar example of how material gain has caused man to lose self-reliance. Here, philosophy is the subject and the example is stated as a question. It is the final 'stepping stone' to an implied topic sentence: 'man through material gain has lost some of his self-reliance.'

A. *Choose examples carefully*

Many people regard material advances as having only positive value. Emerson takes the position that material advances and even civilization itself can take away man's independence. To support his position, Emerson presents a wide variety of examples. The examples he chooses, however, are both familiar and sound. The first example ('The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet') draws the reader into the paragraph. Other examples refer to man's drawing away from nature.

Practice 1. In several sentences explain why two of the following examples from the selection are well chosen to give support to Emerson's main idea.

a. 'His notebooks impair his memory . . .'
b. '. . . his libraries overload his wit . . .'
c. 'The solstice he does not observe . . .'
d. '. . . the insurance office increased the number of accidents . . .'

Practice 2. Write a paragraph in which you present examples from 20th century civilization to support the statement that material advances can take away man's self-reliance. (One example might be 'Television occupies our leisure

hours but dulls our minds.') You may wish to follow the pattern of Emerson's paragraph but draw your examples from 20th century inventions.

B. *Arrange examples in an effective order*

Emerson does not simply let his examples 'fall where they may.' He skilfully arranges them in an order that is most effective.

The first four examples present contrasting thoughts. In each case, Emerson gives first the positive, then the negative, aspect. In the first three sentences the contrasting word *but* emphasizes the importance of the negative aspect. Emerson's next examples are completely negative. To say that notebooks impair memory, that libraries overload mental ability, and that insurance offices increase the number of accidents creates a startling effect. We ordinarily think of them as having only positive value. By presenting a series of negative examples, Emerson gets the reader to think about the element of truth in his examples. He also creates a solid effect by repeating several examples of the same type. If we scan the selection again, we notice that the examples move from a simple to a complex order, from a familiar to an unfamiliar order. The example starts with the way a man travels and tells time and ends with the way he lives up to his religion or philosophy. Thus, the first examples are simple and familiar: 'coach,' 'feet,' 'crutches,' 'muscle,' 'watch.' The later examples are more complex: 'wit,' 'energy,' 'Christianity,' 'virtue.'

Practice 3. Select a statement of your own choice or one of the following. Then list at least five examples that support the statement. Try to include some contrasting examples and some that are only positive or negative examples.

a. Americans have set amazing records in sports.
b. Adolescence is a difficult time.
c. Teenagers tend towards 'togetherness.'
d. Money is the root of all evil.

Practice 4. Using the statement and examples you listed in Practice 3, write a paragraph in which you pay particular attention to the arranging of these examples in an effective order. You might arrange your examples in a simple-to-complex order. You might arrange them in a time sequence made up of such examples as sports records set many years ago to sports records set today.

APPENDIX 2

COMPOSITION RATING SCALES

(Scoring: one point for each item except where otherwise stated)

Variable 1: Selection of detail to support the purpose

—— Does the writer use more than two specific details?
—— Does the writer use both concrete and specific details?
—— Are the details relevant to the purpose? If more than one irrelevant detail is included, do not give this point.
—— Are the details well chosen or would almost any others do?
—— Are physical details included?
—— Are psychological details which help define character included?

—— Are the details vivid? Can you visualize them?
—— Do the details appeal to the sense of taste, touch or hearing?
_____
Total

Variable 2: Sense of Audience and Purpose
—— Can you, the reader, state the purpose of the author?
—— Was it quite easy to ascertain just what the purpose was?
—— Did the writing deal consistently with a single purpose?
—— Would the writing be likely to move the intended audience in the direction intended by the author?
—— Was the language and vocabulary suited for the target audience or was the paragraph written in bland 'teacher pleasing' style?
—— Could you identify the assigned audience from reading the paper?
—— Did the paper show evidence of the author's having identified probable viewpoints and biases of the reader?
—— Did the author refute these biases?
_____
Total

Variable 3: Good topic and concluding sentence
Topic Concluding
—— —————— (1 each) Can you clearly identify a topic *and* a concluding sentence?
—— —————— (1 each) Do these sentences have an appropriate impact or effect on the reader or are they tacked on and crudely contrived?

Topic Concluding
—— —————— (1 only) Does the topic sentence specify the object of the writing and an attitude about it?
—— —————— (1 each) Do the topic and concluding sentences serve a real purpose, or do you feel that you could do without them?
—————— (1 only) Does the concluding sentence say something unique, but important, or is it just a trivial rewording of the topic sentence?
—————— (1 only) Do the topic and concluding sentences work together?
_____
Total

Variable 4: Punctuation
—— Does the student use capital letters correctly?
—— Does the student terminate his sentences properly?
—— Does the student employ possessives and are they punctuated correctly?
—— If the student uses quotations, are the commas, question marks and periods associated with the quotations placed correctly?
—— If the student makes no more than a single *error* in each of the above categories, add 1 additional point.

—— Does the student use italics, ellipses, exclamation marks, dashes, special indentations, or other miscellaneous punctuation correctly?

_____

Total

Variable 5: Usage

—— Is the paragraph free of incomplete sentences?
—— Is the paragraph free of 'run-on' sentences (i.e., sentences made up of independent clauses, connected by commas but not by conjunctions or semi-colons)?
—— Is the paragraph free of errors in agreement of subject and verb?
—— Is the paragraph free of errors of pronoun reference?
—— Is the paragraph free of spelling errors?
—— Does the student write any meaningless sentences?
—— Does the student write any sentences which are obviously awkward?
—— If the student made no more than a single *error* in each of the above categories give one extra point.

_____

Total

No. of sentences=————
Do not give the bonus points if the paper contains less than eight sentences.

Variable 6: Effective organization of paragraph

—— Does the author use more than just the simple sentences?
—— Does the author use both compound and complex sentences?
—— Does the author use sentences of varying length? (Are some sentences at least three times as long as others?)
—— Does the author use both positive and negative examples?
—— Does the author arrange his sentences in a logical order such as concrete to abstract, simple to complex, familiar to unfamiliar, geographically, chronologically, etc.?
—— Does the order and organization of the sentences make the paper easier to understand?
—— Does the author use transitional devises between sentences frequently, or do his paragraphs sound like lists?
—— (2 points) General effect of the paper as a unified whole.

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Total

Variable 7: Attitudes towards writing

—— Does the writer indicate that he has done much writing?
—— Does the writer express favourable attitudes towards writing, or does he suggest that it is a waste of time?
—— Does the writer show evidence of having enjoyed the writing which he has done?
—— Does the writer indicate that writing serves some useful purpose?
—— Has the writer written broadly, or are his writings narrow in scope and purpose?

—— Has the writer written largely in response to assignments or has he done writing on his own?
—— Has the writer chosen serious topics to discuss, or trivial ones?
—— Does the paper express real personal conviction based on experience, or is the author trying to impress the teacher?
—— As a result of reading this paper, do you believe a person would really feel like doing more writing?

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Total

REFERENCES

1. GINTHER, J. R. A conceptual model for analyzing instruction. In Lysaught, J. (Ed.), *Programed instruction in medical education*. Rochester, N.Y.: University of Rochester, 1965.
2. TYLER, R. *Constructing achievement tests*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University, 1934.